

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

STANFORD MEDICAL CENTER
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94304

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS
Professor Joshua Lederberg

✓
Area Code 415
321-1200

August 2, 1968

Dr. Harold Aaron
The Medical Letter
Drug and Therapeutic Information, Inc.
305 E. 45 Street
New York 10017

Dear Dr. Aaron

I would be grateful to you for information you may have available on: ---

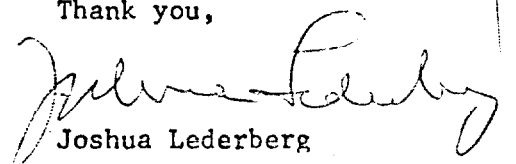
I would like to write a column on the Medical Letter, and would appreciate as much background information as you can conveniently send me: its origins, original and present financing, impact on the profession, published criticisms (+/-), how you arrive at authoritative judgments, and how you deal with controversy and complaints about implied advertising.

(For example, the 6/14 issue refers to an Insect Sting First Aid-- aren't you going to get 10 other vendors on your back to mention their equally good products?)

Your enterprise is a fascinating one, besides its obvious importance in medicine, as a way of making public disinterested technical advice. I am very much interested in the subtler kinds of pressures that interfere with this, and how you cope with them. Have you had any indication that detail men will pick up your comments, either as adverse to their competitors, or occasionally even laudatory about an established drug?

Have you had any foundation or govt. support? Have you ever been approached by the PMA about bloc support from them? (I assume you wouldn't want it; why ~~fx~~ can't physicians readily support such an enterprise and save you from as many pressures as possible.) Have there been expressions of support or otherwise from organized medical societies? Proposals for block subscriptions? Can you stay afloat without them?

Thank you,


Joshua Lederberg

NOTE: I write a weekly column on "Science and Man" for the Washington Post and affiliated newspapers. Your information may be helpful to me in drafting future columns.

H. Aaron